Tiberius Claudius Donatus

(fl. Late 4th Century – Early 5th Century)

BRIEFING

Tiberius Claudius Donatus was a Roman Latin grammarian of the late 4th and early 5th century AD of whom a single work is known, the *Interpretationes Vergilianae*, a commentary on Virgil's *Aeneid*. His work, rediscovered in 1438, proved popular in the early modern age; 55 editions of this book were printed between 1488 and 1599.

WORKS

In his commentary, Donatus claims that the *Aeneid* is a work of rhetoric with the intention of praising Aeneas, stating that it is best explained by rhetors, not grammarians; therefore, he sticks to a strict literal analysis of the text. He also criticizes existing criticisms of the *Aeneid*, saying that they fail to identify Virgil's apparent rhetorical advocacy for Aeneas. Donatus also maintains that Virgil was not a philosopher but rather a teacher, and that the best way to read the *Aeneid* is with an understanding of its universal scope.

He should not be confused with Aelius Donatus, even though both are known for writing about Virgil.

ISSUE

Donatus had a son by the name of Tiberius Claudius Maximus Donatianus, to whom he dedicated his *Interpretationes*.